

# franciscan

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Christ driving the traders from the Temple, El Greco, 1457

## Power in the New Testament

by Leslie Houlden



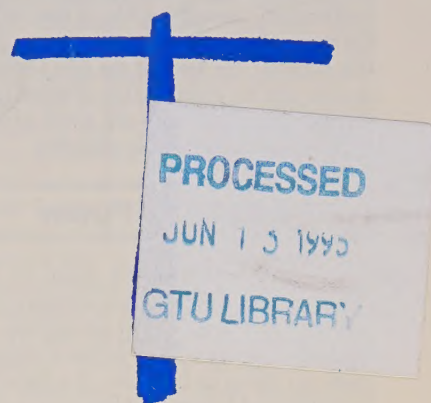
**The New Testament is inconsistent about power and has bequeathed to Christians a legacy of ambiguity about its character, its morality and its exercise.**

To begin at the verbal level: the common Greek word for 'power' (*dunamis*) comes in almost every New Testament book (though not in the Gospel of John). Most pervasively and with great assurance, it refers to the power of God - simply taken for granted. Authorised and empowered by God, Jesus too has power, showing itself in the world in acts of healing and exorcism which are themselves manifestations of God's sovereignty.

This power of Jesus is so physical that he can even feel it ebbing from him when a sick woman touches his clothing (*Mark 5.30*). Nowhere in these early Christian writings is there any hint of doubt about the reality of this power, even though its verifiable manifestations (through Jesus and his followers who are empowered by him) are, on any reasonable view, so few and

irregular. This is largely explicable in terms of the world-view of the period in which so many happenings, 'natural' to us, were seen as the outworkings of divine power, exercised either directly or through invisible angelic forces ('powers') - and obstructed or countered by other invisible, demonic agents.

While *dunamis* means force, ready and available for use, *exousia*, close in sense, tends to mean power exercised within a recognised framework - 'authority'. Jesus, like God, certainly has this quality: 'he was teaching them as one having authority' (*Mark 1.22*). He uses this authority to forgive sins (*Mark 2.10*) and gives his disciples authority to heal and to expel demons (*Mark 3.15; 6.7*), just as angels too have authority from God (*Rev. 18.1*). *Exousia*, then, draws attention to the



## Power

In this issue, Leslie Houlden explores the ambiguities surrounding power in the New Testament; Catherine Ryan surveys some of the issues besetting power-sharing in religious communities and Penelope Jamieson reflects on the experience of ordained women and power within the Church. Martin Conway gives a comprehensive review of Walter Wink's Powers trilogy.

## Contents

Power in the New Testament	1
'The Fire and the Rose'	3
Minister's Letter	4
Sharing power in religious communities	5
Power and powerlessness in Stepney	6
The Walter Wink Trilogy	7
Empowering the people	8
Spirit Power	9
William of Ockham	10
Community Addresses	11
Community Routes	12
Book Reviews	14
Thaddæus SSF	16



structure of the universe in which, despite demonic and human threats, God's power is supreme and will ultimately triumph. The drama of history is wholly geared to that consummation, when Jesus will return 'with great power and glory' (*Mark 13.26*), subordinate all other powers to himself (*1 Cor. 15.24*) and make God's sovereignty manifest 'in power' (*Mark 9.1*).

This pattern is so dominant in the New Testament that it is easy to think that it sums up and exhausts early Christian reflection on the subject of power; and undoubtedly something like it has sufficed for many Christians down the years. But if that were all, the faith of the first Christians would not be particularly distinctive or noteworthy, apart from the place given to Jesus in the cosmic power-structure.

## Intangible Power

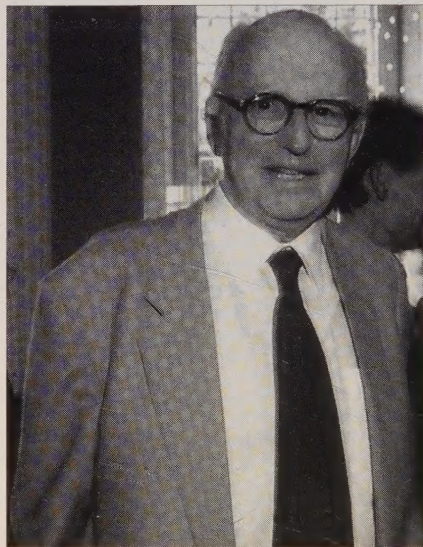
It would certainly be open to easy objections, both in its first-century terms and from a critical modern perspective. For example: how can such inflated claims be made for Jesus on the basis of a handful of healings and other striking acts done in rural Galilee? How does this picture of largely invisible and intangible power accommodate the all-too-obvious agencies of power in the world - political, economic, social? Is the New Testament picture, as so far described, not a fantasy of compensation created by those without power to do anything very much, little people of the first-century world? In other words, the New Testament picture in relation to this important subject can easily seem neither helpful nor satisfactory once you distance yourself a little from its own narrow world-view and raise what must seem natural and pressing questions.

In fact, however, most of the New Testament writers do not confine themselves to the picture that has been outlined, and some so modify it as to turn it upside down and inside out. Sceptical modern realists, acutely aware of the depth of human calamity that makes talk of divine power seem an absurdity or at best an insubstantial dream, may begin at this point to pay attention.

The death of Jesus by the ignominious penalty of crucifixion put any lasting effect of his work on a knife-edge. At that point, involving as they surely did the promise of the manifestation of God's power, the message of Jesus and the Jesus-movement might easily have been extinguished. Alternatively, the experiences associated with the resurrection of Jesus might have in effect obliterated his death, if not from Christian memory, then at any rate from the Christian pattern of significant belief. The resurrection, in other words, would have been seen as the ample compensation for the temporary setback of Good Friday. Indeed, for some early Christians - and for many since - that is precisely what happened. It may be that the Gospel of Luke takes a few steps in that direction. To read the sweep of Luke's story on into the Acts of the Apostles is to get a sense of Calvary as a power-cut speedily reversed.

Fortunately, others stood their ground. They absorbed the shock, and even turned the brute iron of the crucifixion into gold. In so doing, they gave Christianity its special voice and created its unique gospel. Among the New Testament writers, we owe this achievement in the first place to Paul. It is evident, chiefly from his letters to the Christian community in Corinth, that he was dealing with people who, like many more recent enthusiasts, not only did not look far beyond their personal Christian notes, but chiefly valued their Christian identity for the sense of heightened religious capacity and ecstatic unusualness that it gave to them.

For them, 'power' was all too plain, though it was less clear what it all boiled down to when it came to effects in the world or even in ordinary goodness. Paul's reaction to this state of affairs is severe. This perception of power is for him little to do with the faith that stems from Jesus; it is simply an instance of human religiosity (*'Wisdom'*, *1 Cor. 1-2*). That faith must face the cross head on: 'but we preach a crucified Messiah' (*1 Cor. 1.23*). It is therefore a faith which, relentlessly and



Professor Leslie Houlden

mysteriously, seeks God's power, against the probabilities, in powerlessness and failure.

For Paul this is no easy path, for he is a major go-getter by temperament and ability, one of the world's achievers and initiators. But he sees the key to all things in his multiple sufferings (*2 Cor. 4.7-11; 6.3-10; 11.23-30*). For him, the message of Jesus is summed up thus: 'My power is made perfect in weakness' (*2 Cor. 12.9*); and his own sense of himself: 'When I am weak, that's when I am powerful' (*12.10*). That leaves endless loose ends, as well as incredulity and disappointment among adherents, deflated at the core of their religious sensibility; but for Paul it is the heart of the matter. And we may be grateful that Paul got the point, right at the start.

The Gospel of Mark, with its equally candid and relentless picture of a Jesus whose destiny is chiefly to die, makes a worthy successor to Paul. Like him, and writing twenty years after the letters to

Corinth, Mark damps down the triumph and faces the history - not simply for the sake of the record ('facing facts', as we might virtuously put it), but as the key to Jesus' significance as a matter of theology: 'the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (*Mark 10.45*); and, as Paul had already shown in his life and writing, for his followers it was precisely the same (*8.34*).

## Grasping the nettle

In the Gospel of John, the nettle is grasped even more graphically, with the death of Jesus interpreted in terms of 'exaltation' (with a pun on the verb 'lift up' for crucifixion, *12.32*), 'glory' (*13.31 etc.*) and 'fulfilment' (*19.30*). There's where power is - where, in 'real' terms, it is non-existent.

Now it is the case that the plain account of God's power with which we began and the wholly paradoxical account of it created by Jesus' death are hard to marry together. Among the New Testament writers, John is the one who does it most satisfactorily in conceptual terms, though at the price of a depiction of Jesus which seems to convey a certain immunity to mere humanness.

Mark gives the starkest picture of a powerless Jesus for and through whom there is scarcely a glimmer of light, though just a sufficient hint of it (*16.7*). And Paul shows how one might live in such a pattern and with a perception of life thoroughly pervaded by it. None of them quite explains why God's power should express itself so unexpectedly as to make the word itself hazardous - except to say that all stems from God's love (*John 3.16; Gal. 2.20*). Is love, then, its own explanation?

Then there is yet another paradox. It is Paul who, of all the New Testament writers, was in fact the great practical achiever, founding Christian communities and enlisting gentile members all over the place: in other words, setting up a network and a structure in which power among Christians became inevitable - both in their own organisation and, eventually, in relation to the other power-structures of society at large. So there began that long love-hate of Christianity in relation to power which remains prominent among us.

Both the resurrection and the vision of a coming new age, when God's authority will be perfected, have generally made Christianity a religion and the church an organisation where power has been taken as normal and exercised much as it is everywhere in human affairs; dissidents suppressed, wealth sought or fawned on, political possessors legitimated and supported despite almost any injustices and corruptions. But tempering all this and sometimes exposing it and sending it packing, there has always been the figure of Jesus who abjured power and was content to die as God's saving martyr 'for the joy that was set before him' (*Heb. 12.2*). In the Christian vocabulary, 'power' is a word that carries a health warning.

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# The Fire and the Rose

by Penny Jamieson

*'When the tongues of flame are in-folded  
Into the crowned knot of fire,  
And the fire and the rose are one'*

T. S. Eliot Little Gidding



One of the topics I am asked most frequently to write or to speak about is that of *Women and Power*.

It would appear to be endlessly fascinating and nowhere more so than within church circles. Perhaps this is because the conjunction of women and power in the church is still a novelty, despite the fact that within the Anglican Communion women have been ordained for more than twenty years. The issue appears to have come to a real crunch since women have been ordained as bishops.

Yet women in leadership and in roles of power are by no means uncommon in the secular world. A recent edition of *North and South*, a New Zealand glossy magazine, gave brief portraits of over thirty women who hold positions of leadership in industry, in commerce, in public administration, in politics and in the church. Many of them are young women, some are well established, all are primarily concerned with doing their job well. It made me feel very normal.

*Women within the church have exercised spiritual and informal power effectively for a long time; but only recently has the institution sanctioned the formal use of power by women.*

But in church circles, this is not the case. Whereas most of the attention that my position seems to be associated with, novelty and so on, quite naturally after nearly five years, has died away, this is less so in such overseas environments where women are not regarded as suitable material for the episcopate.

Such attitudes have much more to do with both the history and the character of the Christian church, undoubtedly a very entrenched patriarchal structure, which is supported by and which supports a theology that can very easily be swung into service to glorify subordination. Some of the struggles that women within our Communion have had, to gain leadership, reflect the degree of resistance the church has shown in response to questions of admitting women to leadership.

For there are particular fascinations and entanglements where the exercise of power by women within the Christian community

is in question. The Christian gospel places firm emphases on the redemptive value of suffering and of taking the 'lower place'. When genderized, as it has been for so long, this becomes an argument that has both supported the subordination of women and which has also (by the none-too-subtle predisposition that God has to be the 'lowly') increased the spiritual power that women bear.

## Powerful critique

There is, too, the well known and well documented ambivalence that women themselves have about holding power. For centuries, women have endured the abuse of male power, no less within the church than elsewhere, and hence a powerful critique of power as such has developed. This is a natural reluctance, but the problem is also that, with the assumption of power, women realise that they are no longer at the mercy of historical events but can determine them. This strips women of many of the traditional identities of femininity that feel right and comfortable.

In many ways, the critique of power that issues from consciousness of oppression and abuse confuses public power, which entails the ability to do great harm to others, with the inevitability of doing that harm. It also begs the possibility that women could do great good, if they were to grasp that power and handle it skilfully.

Women within the church have exercised spiritual and informal power effectively for a long time; but only recently has the institution sanctioned the formal use of power by women. Ordination, whether to the priesthood or the episcopate, undoubtedly confers institutional power. It would be unreal to deny this. Such power is on a par with secular institutions.

The sources of ambivalence are many: most apparent is the fact that women in powerful positions do not always attract the admiration of other women. Indeed, it would seem that among the greatest barriers to women's power and leadership are the fear of criticism and the fear of having too much power. Women in power have described being on the end of women's criticism as feeling 'almost physically painful, like a series of blows that left them virtually incapacitated.' It was, they said, 'punishment' which they saw as an inevitable consequence of taking power which made the pursuit of leadership or success, at times, seem 'not worth it'. Many saw becoming a leader as dangerous. Paradoxically, they said, the more visibility,

recognition and power they had, the less they felt in control.\*

So women can get caught in a double bind about their assumption of and use of power. In some circles, a kind of neo-puritanism operates about women in power. The argument runs like this: because it is a woman involved, it must be 'okay'; but also the converse: because it is power, it must be wrong, and the woman who dares to so operate must therefore be wrong. This is to limit the construct of power to that of gendered behaviour; I do not think that is correct. Certainly, women often fear using power, aware that this fear comes from the fear that, in our heart of hearts, we are not at all sure that those aggressive, controlling, dominating and violent impulses are so alien to us after all. It can indeed be thus, for women are as human as men.

There is also a double bind inherent in ordination. Ordination does indeed confer power in the institutional sense. A community gives its priests leadership and expects them to orchestrate the decision-making processes for the life of that community. We used to ask them to make all the decisions for us, but no longer. But ordination, if the Spirit is properly at work, also reflects a measure of spiritual power. Spiritual power is the power to influence others through one's own being - by example, by kindness, by wisdom, by love, above all through prayer. Whereas institutional power has to do with ambition and control, spiritual power has much to do with surrendering control. Institutional power is a matter of externals; spiritual power is a matter of what is within.

## Institutional power

It is enormously tempting to the possessor of institutional power to lose touch with his or her humanity and thereby forsake the path of spiritual power. Not for nothing were monks warned against those who would make them bishops - *nolo episcopari*.

But are they opposites? Need we resort to this simplistic 'either/or' thinking? If we do, we risk leaving the governance of our



Joyce Jarrold CSF

*Celebrating Women*



institutions to the spiritually infantile. It would seem likely, and indeed the example of Jesus suggests that this is so, that the most spiritually adept people will be the ones most likely to handle institutional power gracefully - to exercise power without succumbing to its temptations, its corrupting influences. And also the experience of institutional power can often enable someone to grow into the further reaches of spiritual power.

These can be profound and at times troubling questions for Christian women who are called to exercise leadership. At root, they are spiritual issues, what happens to the conscience of the woman who dares to be different.

As a bishop, I have been no more immune from these ambivalences than has any other ordained woman, but I have observed, both as a bishop and a spiritual director, that women ordained into a church that is both accustomed to and accepting of the ministry of women have a much simpler time of it. Some things do get easier. Nonetheless, I think that one of the major tasks of women in Christian leadership is to develop an authentic spirituality of strength.

## Male power

I am sure that we need to learn to use the traditionally-male power and to face the complexity of our own human struggle between our need to be liked and the autonomy necessary for the exercise of power. The obligation to rethink power relations and to address social interconnectedness and planetary health is not a 'women's problem'; it is, urgently, human. I have little doubt that God's agenda is that we should raise these issues for the whole church.

Meanwhile, women need also to be aware of the call to support women who dare to assume leadership. Women must quite positively shower each other with positive reinforcement and sheathe stray claws; conflict between women tears us up in a unique way.

All of us in Christian leadership are entrusted with power in order that the gospel freedom may be experienced authentically by all for whom we are priest or bishop. We might be *alter Christus*, but we are not to stand in the way of that freedom. I have found that it is essential for me to remember that any authority, any power I have, has been entrusted to me by the church for the benefit of the church. The basis of any effective use of any power, in my experience, is the establishment and the maintaining of good, sound relationships. It takes a long time to build up trust, and that trust can never be presumed upon. I, too, live by the grace of God.

\* Naomi Woolf, **Fire with Fire**, London, Chatto & Windus

Penelope Jamieson is Bishop of Dunedin in New Zealand and Deputy Protector for CSF sisters in that country.

## Minister's Letter

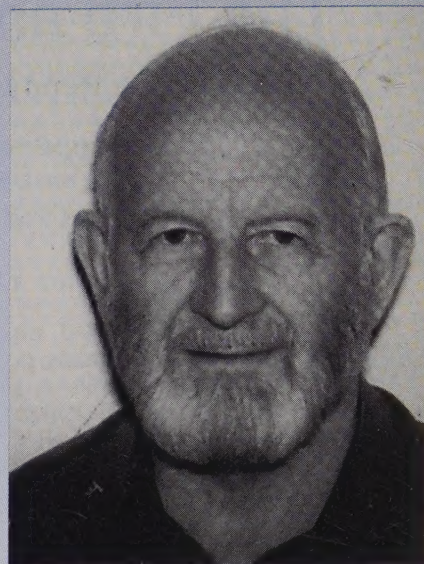
**Brother Brian, Minister General of the First Order Brothers:**

I write from Stroud in New South Wales, Australia, where I am based and which has been my home since 1979. Having just completed the seventh decade of my earthly existence I can now say I have spent almost half my life in the southern hemisphere, for I first landed in Australia in 1961 on my way to Papua New Guinea and consequently have had strong connections with Australia ever since. Besides being British, I am also an Australian citizen.

It is easy to call nations which have gained political independence within the past twenty or thirty years 'developing': nations such as Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Zimbabwe and others where there are Anglican Franciscans friars whom it is my privilege and joy to visit. Yet Australia is also developing. For, although there are Aborigines who have been here for thousands of years, the present identity of the nation is little more than two hundred years.

In the thirty four years that I have known Australia, to some degree, I have witnessed change and development. From a country which until twenty years ago boasted a 'white Australia' policy, it must now be one of the most multi-cultural nations there is in the southern hemisphere. People of Asian background, eastern European, Italian and Greek, Middle-Eastern, and Pacific Islander live alongside those of Anglo-celtic roots. In the cities it is said that one in every eight is Asian. All ethnic groups have to be aware of, and listen to, the relatively small Aborigine population if they are to be truly Australian, develop anything which might be called an Australian spirituality and appreciate the sacredness of this vast land. I find this multi-culturalism exciting and rich and, in the love of Christ, full of hope for the future.

This is not to say that Australia is without power struggles in the political, economic, commercial, academic and even ecclesiastical arena. Wherever there is selfishness among human beings, there are



bound to be some unpleasant tensions. There are, indeed, intense social problems caused by alcoholism, drug addiction, secularist ideologies, unemployment and greed. But there is also a growing search for meaning, for love and spiritual life, for God.

The church has to be seen and experienced as a loving community which is keen to meet this search for the Way, the Truth and the Life - a community of compassion and nurture. The only power which Christians should want to convey is the power of love which reconciles and unites people of diverse backgrounds in this land of opportunity.

Through their prayer, their presence in society, and in the varied ways of proclaiming the gospel, Christians - collectively and individually - have the opportunity of pointing a hedonistic nation to God and, in the name of Christ, being channels of God's love and power to a people discovering new life in a relatively new nation.

Franciscans have a significant part to play in this mission. In whatever country we live, we need to make our own the exhortation of Saint Clare to her sisters: 'Praise God by your life!'

Brian SSF

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Brother,

Thank you for publishing an extract from the admirable address given by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the General Chapter. He referred to 'the three main parties of evangelicals, anglo-catholics and liberals'. I would like to draw attention to a fourth constituency, not a party, to which I believe a majority of the members of the Church of England belong. We agree with the late Dean Inge that 'all labels are libels.' We try to be catholic (in derivation, much the same as ecumenical) without being labelled Catholics; evangelical without being labelled Evangelicals; and liberal without being labelled Liberals. We believe that such a

comprehensive, eirenic spirit is particularly appropriate to Anglican Christians. Many years ago, the late Dr Alec Vidler said to me that it was time for ecclesiastical parties in the Church of England to run into the sand. I would like to think that indirectly, by taking a catholic, evangelical and liberal stance, free of party bias, SSF is playing a part in lessening the influence of ecclesiastical parties in our church.

Yours sincerely,  
Horace Dammers

● Ed: Yes, but I thought that that was what the Archbishop was also trying to say! Possibly reproducing his whole text would have made it clearer.



# Sharing Power in Religious Communities

by Catherine M. Ryan



**We were visited by a former member of our community. Upon settling herself in the house, she asked: 'Who's in charge?' My feeling response was ambivalent: I recognised how we had moved on as a group in the time since our visitor had been a part of our community; but I was still disappointed that the old ways of seeing things and the old labels still prevailed.**

As a community group, we had made the conscious decision to try to collaborate towards a vision of community requiring individual commitment and responsibility, and our daily life is characterised by the journeying towards that vision, rather than its accomplishment. So I am continually asking myself: why does there seem to be such a gap between the vision and the ideal? What prevents us from grasping the vision?

## Power = Authority?

In my experience, power is too often used as a synonym for authority in religious life; when it is not, it frequently carries pejorative tones. It is unhelpful to narrow the meaning of the word in this way, preventing us from developing our understanding and our practice.

The dictionary's twenty-four definitions of power lists only fourthly 'control or domination or a position of control, domination or authority', its first definitions focusing on abilities and capacities for action. To try to redress the balance of understanding away from authority and dominance, I find it helpful to think of power primarily as energy. This allows for a wider understanding that embraces not just things related to the power of legitimate authority, but also to claiming personal power, and enabling others to claim theirs. This can be more in keeping with the vision today's Religious are trying to live, and leads me to ask two questions: to what extent is our present reality influenced by bureaucratic notions of 'ideal' structures in religious life?; do these ideas have a blocking effect on change?

## Power and change

A cursory review of the history of religious life supports an early evolution into a very structured lifestyle, with highly differentiated tasks and functions pertaining to the individual member. This can become so ingrained into the consciousness of community members that with each successive generation, it becomes more difficult to eradicate. In the end, it is impossible for most Religious (who, after all, chose to join a highly structured group) to envisage the community in any other way. Obviously, this has implications for the sharing of power and our efforts to change, or broaden, how it happens in our communities. So, in part at least, we are prisoners of our history. How we choose to

become liberated within our history, rather than liberated from it, is another matter.

In a study of organisational culture, Andrew Pettigrew\* has described the development of the religious life in three phases. A first phase would be the founding phase, characterised by great energy and risk, fired by a vision and with the freedom and lack of formal structures which facilitate great strides in the realisation of that vision. A second phase would see the settling of the community into a recognised and stable lifestyle, now its fight for survival and recognition is not paramount, it has attained some recognition for its efforts and there is a ready supply of new members. The pattern of life is routine. A third phase is one where the ways of routine are no longer adequate and it is recognised that the group's mission may have been 'domesticated', and so is characterised by a struggle for rebirth.

## Personal power

It could be said that we are currently in a kind of third phase and, to move forward, each of us needs to own the positive and negative legacies of the past. A person's choice of religious life, as suggested above, bears some relationship to what each one perceives they need, and where they feel at home. For some, the past structures of religious life have provided the necessary springboard creatively to claim personal

power and identity in the group; for others, a protective surround within which to live common life. Many leadership teams, and many individual Religious, face the dilemma of how to allow forward movement by those who wish it, whilst not demanding of other members more than they can give, or leaving them behind as a 'sink group'. There are no ready-made solutions; they must be tailored to the particular group and its members, thereby modelling a kind of power-sharing and respect for one another that may be a powerful spur to embracing change.

Beginning this process probably amounts to a disjunctive change for most of us, resulting in a major shift of awareness and practice. It seems to me that there are certain ingredients that may only come from

*People need to be in touch with their own personal power if they are to take a consciously responsible part in the life of the community.*

leadership level, and others which individuals have to put in for themselves; the two form a virtuous circle, each benefitting the action of the other. Let me deal with leadership first. A leader who is ill-at-ease in their own person and psyche will find it difficult to bring the best out of the members, and be open to the huge spectrum of expectations and attitudes which exist, because much will appear as a threat.

For the emotionally damaged this will perpetuate the vicious circle, rather than inspire confidence in the leadership and give a sense of direction. Well-adjusted leadership is able to embrace the membership, its potential and its hurt, and gently enable the former to be released and the latter to be healed. Once people begin to see this happening in the group, it will have



Sister Catherine Ryan at the First Order General Chapter, with Sister Pat and Sister Jennie

Joyce Jarrold CSF



# Power & Powerlessness in Stepney

by Brother David SSF

a positive effect. Members begin to recognise progress, and look for ways of being a part of this movement. For the hurt individual, it is very often fear of what might be expected of them in claiming the future that blocks progress.

At the individual level, people need to be in touch with their own personal power if they are to take a consciously responsible part in the life of the community. To be a 'powerful person' and be in touch with one's power is one thing, and a creative energy in the life of the group; to be controlled by one's power in an unredeemed sense is exactly the opposite: it is destructive. Indeed, few of us are so together that we do not sometimes act out our power in an unhelpful way. Perhaps, however, this is a way of viewing the conversion to which each Christian is called.

## Christian maturity

One aspect of growing into Christian maturity means, for me, a constant 'sitting with' my reactions and my feelings, sifting and sifting again so that I can be reasonably sure that I am acting out of my redeemed self and 'in control' in the liberating way. Only then am I in a position to share my power by enabling others. This is no simple task, for it requires infinite sensitivity to the nuances of communication between the other and myself.

Obviously, this is all of a piece with what is needed at the leadership level, and mutually reinforcing. Neither the leader nor the community member will make a creative contribution to power-sharing in the group if they collude with, or otherwise reinforce, unhelpful power-play within the group out of uncertainty concerning the best way to relate to its more damaged members.

In conclusion, then, religious communities today contain a huge spectrum of perceptions and expectations of community life, some more realistic than others and, as a result, each of us views power sharing in a different way, and each of us has a different capacity for engaging in it. Our collective history has stamped us with characteristics which influence our ability to address change as groups and as individuals, and it is through this history we grow.

Leaders and members of religious communities can facilitate growth by working in partnership - in a sense, modelling for one another the kind of power-sharing to which we aspire. Progress will not be easy; it will come by trial and error. But we will be all the better for that.

\* Andrew M. Pettigrew, **On Studying Organisational Cultures**, Administrative Science Quarterly, 24, 570-581

*Catherine Ryan is a Roman Catholic Servite sister, who was one of the facilitators for the SSF European Provincial General Chapter last year*



**Pineapples, potatoes, power. Power? What was power doing with the fruit and veg. on a market stall opposite Whitechapel Tube in east London? Rob, the stall holder (you know, the one with the toupee), said he'd stock anything he could shift. 'Been selling it by the bushel', bragged Rob.**

My curiosity was tweaked, and I would have tried to get hold of some power but I had nothing to offer in exchange. I thought of a few locals who would be glad of the tip, though.

So I crossed the road and skipped up the steps into the London Hospital. I had some good ideas to share! One of the doctors whizzed through the lobby. I'd recognise Zoe anywhere, so I chased after her. Just as we arrived at her cute red MG, I blurted out the news.

Zoe ran her hand through her hair. 'David,' she said, 'when people have terrible head injuries, it's my decision whether to operate. Not the family's, mine. If the operation works, the patient will be able to resume something like a normal life. If it doesn't work, they'll be left in a persistent vegetative state. I don't need what Rob's offering.' Silly me. I hadn't noticed that Zoe's white coat was already topped with the epaulettes of power.

Twenty minutes later, there I was, admiring the beauty of the Lloyds' Building, when a hand appeared pointing half way to the sky. 'That's where I work,' said a man steadying himself against a wall. He said he ran his own re-insurance business and he was a millionaire. But things weren't going well and he'd spent the morning in a wine bar and he couldn't sleep and he had panic attacks. I kept quiet about Rob's stall. This guy had a whole briefcase full of power and it was making him ill.

I'd just turned into Cable Street when someone shouted, 'Oi, monk!' I could do without this attention, so I kept walking. 'Monk!' A different voice this time, deeper. 'Oi!' That was it. I had to turn and confront them. Four of them, about sixteen. I smiled: it seemed they had already visited Rob's stall. I think they smiled back, but I couldn't be sure: they were wearing the veils traditional to young Muslim women.

On to St Joseph's Hospice in Hackney, where I was directed to a tiny lady named Anna, on the terminal ward. The other patients were tucked up with crochet rugs, but Anna was draped with a huge Arsenal towel. Anna didn't say much; she just lay there and beamed. She had something very special, this lady. Call it stillness, call it peace; either way, people noticed. The nurses said being with her was better than a cigarette break! I kept my mouth shut about Rob's stall - Anna had everything she needed.

On my way home, I hollered a greeting to the pile of blankets and rags in a disused

doorway. Out popped a little face. 'Hello, love,' said Kath, and then her usual question, half teasing, half curious: 'You on your way to church?' I looked at her crutches and the stack of crumpled lager cans. Just as I was about to mention the power on offer, Kath produced an orange and asked if I'd like it. I blinked. There was a lot that Kath needed, but she didn't need me to tell her about that.

Walking past a playground I got talking with a man sitting on a bench. Stuart and his wife lived in a two-bedroomed flat with their four kids. Stuart looked at the colour of my skin and thought I might be an ally: 'The Bangladeshis are bringing this country to its knees, you know. You see that school over there? Five hundred kids and not one of them's English. They get everything: the best flats, schools, jobs. The National Health?: they're bleeding it dry.'

I was dumbstruck; he wasn't open to argument. Stuart wanted power - and so did I, to persuade him to change his views. I headed back to Rob's stall, fast.

'Rob,' I said, 'I want some power, but I've got nothing to offer.' Rob shifted. Power makes him tick; he'll do anything to get his hands on it. 'Listen, bruvver, I'll do you a deal. You take all these boxes, and hand over that.' He pointed at my habit.

*Brother David is a novice and stayed at the Stepney house for the last quarter of 1994*



Brother David



# The Walter Wink Trilogy

by Martin Conway

**NAMING THE POWERS: The Language of Power in the New Testament**

**UNMASKING THE POWERS: The Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence**

**ENGAGING THE POWERS: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination**



Like many of you, I had long since read, and thought I understood reasonably well, Paul's messages about the powers and principalities, and the many stories about Jesus healing people from unclean spirits or confronting the 'prince of this world'. I assigned that sort of terminology to the contemporary world-views surrounding the New Testament writers, without exactly dismissing it all, yet hardly dreaming that, thanks to Walter Wink, it would become for me the key tool for the specific discernment and action entrusted to Christian lay people in today's world.

## Principalities and powers

For Wink bridges the apparent gulf between the New Testament and ourselves quite simply by taking the New Testament terminology seriously and discerning the same sorts of forces at work in our contemporary world. The distinctive discovery came with a passage in the Introduction to *Naming*, where Wink anticipates the main finding of his detailed word-study of the New Testament evidence:

I will argue that the 'principalities and powers' are the inner and outer aspects of any given manifestation of power. As the inner aspect they are the spirituality of institutions, the 'within' of corporate structures and systems, the inner essence of outer organisations of power. As the outer aspect they are political systems, appointed officials, the 'chair' of an organisation, laws - in short all the tangible manifestations which power takes. Every Power tends to have a visible pole, an outer form - be it a church, a nation, or an economy - and an invisible pole, an inner spirit or driving force that animates, legitimates, and regulates its physical manifestation in the world. Neither pole is the cause of the other. Both come into existence together and cease to exist together. When a particular Power becomes idolatrous, placing itself above God's purposes, for the good of the whole, then that power becomes demonic. The church's task is to unmask this idolatry and recall the Powers to their created purposes in the world - 'so that the Sovereignities and Powers should learn only now, through the Church, how comprehensive God's wisdom really is' (Ephesians 3:10, Jerusalem Bible).

Much later in the book that same approach leads to a no less distinctive passage on the relationship between evangelism - the speaking about God's initiative in Jesus - and social action - our follow-up to what God has already done:

Evangelism is always a form of social action. It is an indispensable component of any new

'world' . . . Whenever evangelism is carried out in full awareness of the Powers, whether in confronting those in power or liberating those crushed by it, proclaiming the sovereignty of Christ is by that very act a critique of injustice and idolatry . . . Such evangelism will invariably spark persecution. In sum, structural change is not enough; the heart and soul must also be freed, forgiven, energised, given focus, reunited with their Source.

The converse is equally true: social action is always evangelism, if carried out in full awareness of Christ's sovereignty over the Powers. Jesus did not just forgive sinners, he gave them a new world . . . Too often our social action has been as devoid of spirituality as our evangelism has been politically innocuous. Too often we have told the Powers that they were wrong but not Whose they are. (*Naming* p.116 ff.)

A second set of clues then comes from the New Testament schema that the Powers are not to be totally destroyed, for what has gone wrong about them is that they have overreached themselves. God has created them, like anything else, you and I included, to serve some aspect of his total purpose(s). Provided we accept our relative place and function we can hope to be - more or less - obedient to what we are created for. But it is characteristic of the Powers (dominions, demons, elements, angels etc.) that they conspire to usurp higher and wider roles than are properly entrusted to them. What

*Every Power tends to have a visible pole, an outer form - be it a church, a nation, or an economy - and an invisible pole, an inner spirit or driving force that animates, legitimates, and regulates its physical manifestation in the world. Neither pole is the cause of the other. Both come into existence together and cease to exist together.*

then needs doing is not blasting them out of sight but 'to unmask their idolatrous pretensions, to identify their dehumanising values, to strip from them the mantle of respectability, and to disenthral their victims.' 'It is precisely because the Powers have been created in, through, and for the humanising purposes of God in Christ that they must be honoured, criticised, resisted and redeemed.' (*Engaging* p.164 & 10)

Enough of quotation, though in the three volumes there is much, much more. I hope

this is enough to let you sense how useful this approach is for us in our over-complex and over-developed world of today.

By recapturing a New Testament sense of the clash of spiritual forces, Wink is marvellously well able to convey, especially in the third volume, a sense of urgency and commitment about the necessary confrontation of those 'great powers' in today's world - the ideology of unrestrained capitalism, the advance of western selfishness and greed, the self-centred assumption that nationalism is always right, etc. - which adds up to the 'spiritual warfare' that it is our job as people of God to take up, yes even in the ordinary things of our daily jobs and priorities and relationships.

For it is only as we faithfully carry out our - limited but real - share in the battles with these powers that Jesus has entrusted to his Church, to you and me as lay Christians, that God will be able to move our world as a whole towards the final promise of his Kingdom. Of course if we fail him, he will undoubtedly find other ways of getting his will carried through; we needn't think that everything depends on us and us only.

## Accomplices of powers

But I learn from Wink not only that we can see our little struggles and contributions in the larger context of God's age-long battle with the Powers of this world, but still more that we shall only be deceiving ourselves, and therefore letting ourselves be duped into being accomplices of those Powers, if we fail to take up this key to how to discern and pursue our proper - and in that sense indispensable - obedience to the one who deserves the overall priority, commitment and ultimately love more than the lesser things that so often and easily draw us away.

Indeed, I find myself reflecting that it is precisely in those parts of the world where the sway of the great economic and political powers has been - in worldly terms - most successful, like Western Europe, that it is probably easier for Christians to be subverted into serving them rather than God. Another good reason to be thankful for our fellow Christians in places where the powers-that-be bear down hard; no less than deserving our compassion and help, they are essential for you and me to understand what we are caught up in, to discern how we are coddled and conditioned by hidden powers, and so to discover the combative opportunities that God the Holy Spirit is holding out to us to serve him by relativising and redeeming them.

Martin Conway is President of the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham

● This article has appeared in an extended form in *Christians in Public Life & Ambassador*.

● All three books reviewed are published by Augsburg Fortress Press and are available from SCM Press in U.K.



# Empowering the People

THE CHURCH AND BROAD-BASED ORGANISING

by Brother Bernard SSF



**The growing dissatisfaction with situations in local authorities and national governments (each blaming the other) and the sense, especially among the vast majority of the people who feel themselves marginalised from the decision-making processes and from the material rewards which the enterprising (and lucky) people receive, results in a powerlessness, which leads to apathy, depression, lack of responsibility and outbreaks of violence.**

A similar situation was addressed in the 50's and 60's by Saul Alinsky, a non-believing Jew, street-wise in Al Capone's Chicago, who was convinced that people could be organised to improve their lot in life, so that energy which ran into the sand could be harnessed to effective action. There were notable successes. The movement spread. He worked with the people, rather than for them; resisted the paternalism of liberals; listened to the grassroots; identified 'winnable' targets; moved from reasonable requests, through 'brush-offs' and patronising promises, to determined attitudes, confrontation and finally he showed people-power by bringing people out on the streets. The movement was non-violent, disciplined and successful. It spread over the USA. Not only situations but people were changed.

*The dissatisfaction about housing, work and education has been fertile soil for the British National Party to incite anti-racist feeling and violence and it was only vigorous organising which resulted in the population turning out to defeat the BNP candidate in the local election.*

After Alinsky's death in the mid-70's, it was recognised that the Churches had large followings (40% of the population) and the movement incorporated Church groups into the structures. The involvement of Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and Protestants resulted in some evaluation of the philosophical and theological assumptions and the ethics of the organisation.

This evaluation still continues: the organisation is establishing itself in Britain (in Bristol and Merseyside particularly) and it is especially pertinent to us in east London as we consider the proposal to organise in Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham and Waltham Forest (some of the statistically most deprived areas when, as the latest Rowntree Survey shows, the rich third of the population has raised its standard of living by 30% in the last seventeen years, while the remaining two thirds has stood still). The dissatisfaction

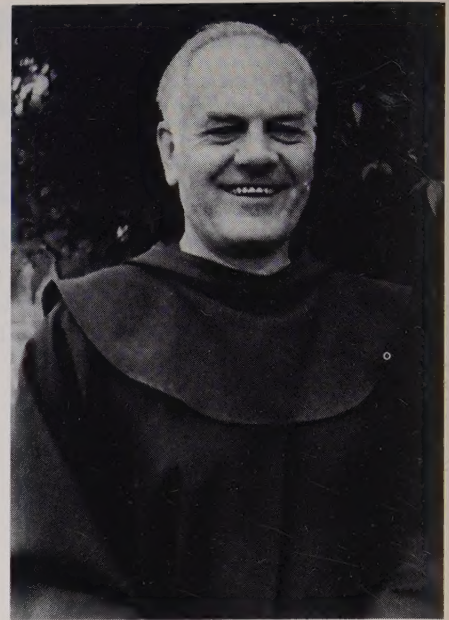
about housing, work and education has been fertile soil for the British National Party to incite anti-racist feeling and violence and it was only vigorous organising (much of it by the Churches) which resulted in the population turning out to defeat the BNP candidate in the local election. Nic Holtam, Vicar of the Isle of Dogs, pays tribute to what he learned of strategy and confidence from Broad-based Organising, of which he is now a strong advocate.

But not all Christians, even socially-minded ones, in our area are convinced. Three sets of issues are around for me: by the time this article is published we shall have met to work at them.

First is the rhetoric 'pick the target, freeze it, personalise it, polarise it', and the working through 'self-interest' (both of the people and those in power) compatible with Christian attitudes of goodwill, reconciliation, fellowship and love. What does Jesus show us about power? Jay Macleod (with degrees from Harvard, Oxford and Nottingham in social studies and theology, and ordained from Lincoln Theological College) in his book *Community Organising - A Practical & Theological Approach* (Christian Action 1988) argues these issues, relying heavily on Reinhold Niebuhr in *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932) and the distinction between personal and public morality. 'Society responds substantially only to power, which means that all the forces of education, piety, charity, reform and evangelism can never hope to eliminate injustice from institutions without dirtying themselves in power conflicts.' 'It is frequently necessary . . . to choose the lesser of two evils, even to incur guilt, recognising that we are justified by faith and free to be responsible to do what is necessary in the interest of justice.' These two Niebuhr quotations bear scrutiny.

The second set of issues is about ends and means. 'Empowering people for what?': are the methods congruous with the end? The Church Urban Fund, following up the Faith in the City Report, gives grants to local community activities to encourage those working for change and community development. Should it continue its grants to Broad-based Organising? This will be the topic of the July Conference of diocesan link people.

The third set of issues, for me, comes from considering mission issues in the light of Robert Warren's little book *Building Missionary Congregations* (CHP £3.95). I believe this is the most important fruit, so far, of the Decade of Evangelism: the



Brother Bernard

Stepney area is soon having Robert for a conference about implementing it. How far are the aims compatible with Broad-based Organising, I ask, and can we major in both at the same time?

I fancy that these kinds of issues are around for many in today's Church. They focus beliefs about God's mission, God's purpose for humanity, the Church and the Kingdom. But reflection alone is no substitute for action.

Brother Bernard lives and works in the Stepney Area of the Diocese of London and is Vice-Chair of the Board of Mission of the General Synod.

## The Cell

My body the Church;  
soul, the sanctuary  
for his abiding.  
My hands, the priest,  
bread carved  
and water cupped.

Each place I go,  
I bear his dwelling.  
The frenzied Mall,  
refreshing shores,  
are all the same  
to him.  
An altar'd place.

I cannot find  
his dwelling  
in stone or spire,  
until I find him  
close,  
in this my mobile tent,  
his best and chosen  
home.

Paul Oliver

*Based on a story of St Francis,  
'For wherever we are, we always take our  
cell with us. Brother Body is our cell and  
our soul is the hermit who lives in it.'*





# Spirit Power

by Brother David Jardine SSF

Over the last few months, many reports have been coming through about an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a church in Toronto.

What has attracted a lot of attention in the newspapers is that when people have been prayed for in this church, many of them have done strange things: laughing, crying, shaking, falling over and lying on the floor, shouting or even roaring. I was due to go to New York in October as part of a team on a healing mission. I decided to travel on and see for myself what was happening in Toronto.

*It was this emphasis on humility, love, gratitude to God, falling in love with Jesus all over again, which convinced me that the experience in Toronto is authentic and genuine.*

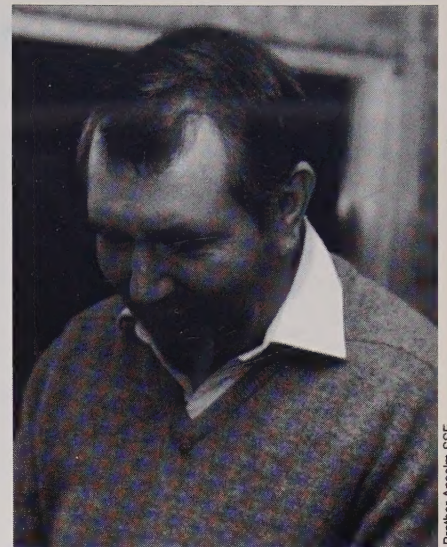
The church which is attracting all the attention is known as the Airport Vineyard, so called because of its proximity to Toronto Airport.

During the day, they sometimes had special sessions for pastors or times of intercession. But the main event was the service each evening, which attracted up to a thousand people. They started with a time of worship for an hour, then some testimonies and a half-hour sermon. Ministry to individuals follows; I think the vast majority of people who came to the services did so to receive ministry.

The night I was there, I left at 2 o'clock in the morning and people were still being prayed for.

During the time of ministry, all the chairs were piled up against the wall and, with the floor clear, people stood in rows, six feet apart. The reason for this was so that if people fell, which most did, there would be room for them to lie on the floor. This is sometimes known as 'being slain in the Spirit' but 'resting in the Spirit' is a much better phrase. When people have this experience they are conscious of what is going on around them but usually experience a real sense of God's peace.

In the Airport Vineyard church they believe that this outpouring of the Holy



Brother Anselm SSF

Brother David Jardine

Spirit is for the refreshment of Christians. In itself it is not revival. Revival may come at a stage in the future; at the moment they believe that God is simply making his Spirit available to refresh and renew Christians.

It is true to say that I did see many strange things in that church in Toronto, many strange manifestations. Yet time and time again those giving the talks or leading worship assured us that the manifestations were not the important thing. The most important thing is what God is doing in our lives, even if we show no manifestations



Saint Francis embraces the leper

## Theme Prayer

Vulnerable God,  
you challenge the powers  
that rule this world  
through the needy,  
the compassionate  
and those  
who are filled  
with longing.

Make us hunger  
and thirst  
to see right prevail  
and single-minded  
in seeking peace,  
that we may see  
your face  
and be satisfied  
in joy;  
through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

Janet Morley



whatsoever. Are we becoming more intimate with God? Are we falling in love with Jesus again?

What helped to make the whole experience authentic and genuine for me was the humility of the staff. By church standards, their building is a very modest one - a converted warehouse. They themselves were only there to serve the huge congregation, most of whom had come from outside Canada. They assured us that in that church there were no superstars. One of the speakers, a doctor of Church History, told us that, if we were not more loving people three or four months after coming here, we had wasted our money.

## No short cuts

The woman who took the time of intercession on the Thursday afternoon said that receiving the Holy Spirit is all about yielding, submitting our lives to God and that was one of the main messages for me. We can go to Toronto and have an experience of the Holy Spirit, but we will leave that experience behind if we don't yield ourselves more wholeheartedly to God and keep our eyes on Jesus at all times. There are no shortcuts to receiving the Holy Spirit.

It was this emphasis on humility, love, gratitude to God, falling in love with Jesus all over again, which convinced me that the experience in Toronto is authentic and genuine.

We don't have to take on board everything they do out there. Undoubtedly, a small number of the manifestations are probably not of God, but are a sign of the need for God's healing and deliverance. It will also require a great deal of wisdom and sensitivity to introduce this form of ministry into our church.

But in spite of all this, I still agree with a Church of Ireland colleague who went out to the Airport Vineyard church in Toronto to find out whether it is of God or not, and came back convinced that it is.

*Brother David Jardine is leader of Divine Healing Ministries in Belfast*

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# William of Ockham

by Andrew Anderson

The 14th century English Franciscan philosopher, William of Ockham, names by his contemporaries *Doctor Invincibilis*, was born around 1285-1290 and died, if his epitaph in the Franciscan Church in Munich is to be believed, on 10 April 1347. According to some accounts, William was a victim of the Black Death which swept Germany in 1349 but, whatever the year, 10 April should be set aside in the Calendar as the day we celebrate this remarkable man.

William showed, perhaps better than anyone else in the history of the Order, the effect of a radical Christian critique can have on ideas and patterns of behaviour beyond the narrow confines of the Church. Fiercely independent, questioning and sceptical, with a critical approach to established systems of thought and knowledge, he consistently courted the disapproval of the Establishment and needed the protection of Emperor Louis of Bavaria in the latter years of his life.

One of William's admirers was Bertrand Russell, who described him as the most important medieval philosopher after Thomas Aquinas. By insisting that it was possible to study logic and human knowledge without reference to metaphysics or theology, William encouraged scientific research and his immediate follower, Nicholas of Oresme, investigated planetary theory. So certain was William of the invincibility of the intellect that he greeted Louis with the words 'Defend me with the sword and I will defend you with the pen.' 'His sharp and critical mind,' says John Moorman, 'tore to shreds some of the theories of previous thinkers, and set the course of speculative thought on a new track which influenced the history of the Church very considerably.' 'He profoundly agitated the Church', the Catholic Encyclopedia somewhat ruefully adds.

William did not hesitate to take an unorthodox line on several key issues of the time, and his views on ecclesiastical authority were decidedly democratic. Constantly in hot water, he was denounced by the Chancellor of Oxford University when he was in his late twenties. He was not afraid of challenging Pope John XXII on the subject of poverty (accusing him at one stage of seventy errors and seven heresies), nor did he seem unduly concerned at the consequences of detention (escaping after four years in 1328), condemnation and excommunication. He was, writes Moorman, 'almost to the very end a rebel.'

While the shock waves William set in motion have largely dispersed into now commonly accepted principles of thought and behaviour his fiercely sceptical, questioning spirit is badly needed today, not only his distrust of property and wealth but also his famous maxim 'Ockham's Razor': 'it is pointless doing with more what can be done with less' (loosely paraphrased).

Bertrand Russell warns against the danger of reading modern doctrines into William's writings, and some might object to applying a philosophical maxim to everyday life, but the question it raises for those trying to live simply and selflessly is unavoidable: why invent a complicated theology and cumbersome structure of Church government when what is called for is plain obedience of the gospel?

William is important because, in Dom David Knowles words, his philosophy was not only a body of doctrine and a new technique of thought but an attitude of mind. While effecting a 'revolution in logic comparable to that brought about by Einstein in the realm of Newtonian physics', poverty remained a practical issue. The ownership of property was, for William, contrary to the Christian ideal, a view shared with the Franciscan Spirituals who wished to return to the simple, unprivileged conditions of the original Rule. 'He arrived', Knowles writes, 'at conclusions less explicitly subversive of the existing state of society but perhaps of almost equal dissolvent power on a long view. Penetrated as he was by a hatred of the wealth and luxury of the papal court and holding as he did the strict theories of his party, he was the enemy of all religious corporations.' It is a radical critique which, if we are to live together without conflict and share the planet's diminishing resources, must be developed in the century to come.

*Andrew is a member of the Third Order living and working in Norwich.*

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# Community Routes

## ◆◆ Beginner's guide

Brixton breakfasts, until Sister Helen Julian's recent move to Stepney, sometimes seemed like a seminar in the religious life in the Roman Catholic Church. Acronym quizzes were frequent: 'What's FCJ?', Sister Joyce would ask. 'Faithful Companions of Jesus' came the swift reply from either Sister Chris James or Helen. 'RSM?' 'Mercy Sisters of some sort, but don't ask me which, they're very confusing.'

This esoteric knowledge has become everyday for Helen and Chris through their jobs. Helen works for the Conference of Religious (CoR) as resources and information assistant at the Social Justice Desk (SJD); Chris as secretary at the National Religious Vocations Centre (NRVC), another part of CoR. Joyce is currently president of the Association of Novice Directors (the mysterious AND which appeared in the last intercession paper). In addition, Sister Nan represents the Anglican Superiors on the CoR Executive and Sister Pat is a member of the Core Group of Justice and Peace Links (J&P Links, or just Links).

So when you next see these initials on the intercession leaflet, you too can play the acronym game!

## ◆◆ Novice in America

'Clear blue sky, warm sun and trees ablaze with red and yellow leaves,' that is how Brother Jason Antony remembers his first morning of a three-month visit to the



*Brother Jason Antony in the Big Apple*

American Province, staying with the community at Little Portion Friary and also in Brooklyn. He was there on an 'exchange', Brother Anthony Balgrove from that Province, and originally from Jamaica, spending time in Britain. Jason writes of many experiences in an eventful and enjoyable time: "There was Brother Thomas Carey's life profession, with altar, organ and brothers in the street, and police helicopters swooping overhead... wearing fluorescent waistcoat and gloves as a parking-lot attendant for an AIDS fund-raising walk... baking bread for a local church fayre... helping Brother Derek in his hospital chaplaincy work and Brother Clark Berge (which rhymes with Fergie) on his mobile health clinic... attending a conference on 'The Religious Life in the Next Millennium'... handing out condoms in the 'red light' district to counter the spread of AIDS." Jason found it all a valuable experience and, with two brothers from the Pacific Islands Province there at the same time, gained insight into SSF's other Provinces.

## ◆◆ Community in Paris

Paris at New Year was the venue for 100,000 young people to sing, study and pray together for five days at the Taizé European meeting. SSF novices from Birmingham attended and were much impressed by the 'depth of worship experienced when a flock bigger than a football crowd came together each day in prayer and praise... and what a feat of organisation was involved in accommodating and feeding such a large group.' Brother Roger of Taizé challenged everyone to be 'reconciled in love' and to 'have hearts large enough, imaginations open enough, love burning enough... to live as a people reconciled without delay' In this context, Brother Lance writes that 'new friends were made and moving scenes took place, like the meeting of young Serbians and Croats away from their war-torn countries finding a common unity in Christ.'

## ◆◆ In Residence

Brother Dominic Christopher writes: It has been the custom of Lincoln Theological College, for some time, to have a member of a religious community in residence during the Lent Term and SSF was asked to provide someone for 1995: the lot fell to me. As it happens, I will be the last Religious in residence because, two days after my arrival, the bishops announced their removal of recognition from the College. This has proved quite



*Sister Pat, on the day of her Life Profession at Compton Durville, 7th January 1995*

painful to many of the students and I have provided a listening ear in many cases. Other duties have been varied and included preaching, talking about SSF, lecturing on Franciscan Spirituality and exercising the ministry of availability, as much as possible. However, the important thing is to be part of a worshipping and learning community, where all are endeavouring to serve God and spread the message of the Kingdom.

## ◆◆ Brother in Bosnia

Brother Thomas Anthony will be travelling through Bosnia in April and May this year, visiting Christian groups and Franciscan houses.



*Brother Damian and Sister Renata CHN at the Archbishop's garden party for those engaged in overseas evangelism*



## ◆◆ Religious together

Franciscans were well represented at the Conference of Religious (CoR) recent annual conference at Swanwick. In fact they made up four out of five of the Anglicans there, joining around 180 Roman Catholic representatives. Joining Brother Damian and Sister Nan, present as Ministers' Provincial, were Sister Joyce as president of AND (see opposite!) and Sister Helen Julian wearing her social justice desk hat. We were stimulated by reports from last autumn's Synod of Bishops in Rome on the subject of the religious life; moved by Peri Aston's performance, in word and movement, of her Triple Image depicting three stages of a woman's life; and much encouraged by very positive and real sharing at a meeting of all the Franciscans present. Nan created, and we all shared in leading, a much appreciated time of worship for the entire conference one evening. And as non-voting members, we were entrusted with counting the votes in the election for a new executive committee. Certainly, ecumenism is alive and well in the religious life.



*Brother Reginald being shorn before attending the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the First Order in New Zealand, on 17th December 1994*

## ◆◆ Round-up

**Felicity** and **Beverley** were noviced at Compton Durville on 4 March . . . **David Francis** was life professed in Edinburgh on 24 March . . . **Simeon Christopher** expects to be professed in first vows on 6 May at Plaistow . . . **Credan, Luke** and **Zacchaeus** have gone on leave of absence . . . **James** has been secularised . . . **Alan John, Barry** and **John** have been released from first profession . . . **Michael Carey** has withdrawn from the noviciate. **Robbie Asaph** has moved to Glasgow . . . **James Anthony** is now living at Halcrow Street, Stepney . . . **Patricia Clare** has moved to Compton Durville . . . **Jason Antony, David, Dominic Mark** and **Philip** are now at Glasshampton, and **Desmond Alban, Lance** and **Nicholas** are in Birmingham.



*Anglican and Roman Catholic Franciscans meet to begin dialogue*

## ◆◆ SSF/OFM Friendship discussions

Both the Order of Friars' Minor (OFM) and the SSF brothers in Britain had independently arrived at a point where some ecumenical initiative between us was seen to be necessary. This bore some fruit in a first meeting held at the Franciscan Friary at Forest Gate on 13 February. Eight brothers took part in three hours of solid dialogue.

This led on from a beautifully prepared time of prayer and readings from the Franciscan Sources where Brother Philip Bartholomew lit candles before the Rublev icon of the Trinity, then later the San Damiano Crucifix and finally before the book of the gospels.

We introduced ourselves in our various settings and quickly learned how many of our attitudes, aspirations and anxieties lay in parallel. Changes are pressing in both our congregations, particularly in areas of mission, in fraternity and pastoral care, and in collaboration - made the more urgent as we recognise our smaller memberships. Ignatius Kelly OFM spoke encouragingly

about the whole shift, as he saw it, from a static view of the Church (perfection seen as coming at the beginning) to a dynamic view where the process is one of growth and development towards the restoration of all things. That change of emphasis in itself provides a pathway for all ecumenical work as across our denominations we stimulate, edify, question and challenge each other in a process of interaction.

Such openness, in the context of Franciscan hospitality, has made an encouraging start to the four scheduled meetings in 1995. Appropriately, we next meet at Plaistow, two miles down the road from Forest Gate. We have been neighbours for a mere hundred years. Now, surely, we are on a more worthy road to friendship.

*Taking part were, from OFM: Quentin Jackson (Minister Provincial), Ignatius Kelly, Patrick Lonsdale; from SSF: Damian (Minister Provincial), Austin, Colin Wilfred, Peter Douglas, Philip Bartholomew.*



*Pacific Islands Province Brothers re-enacting the drama of the Crucifixion*



# Book Reviews

**Bernard Palmer**  
**Men of Habit**  
 Canterbury Press, £12.95

In vivid and well-written essays, Bernard Palmer has brought back to our attention four of the pioneers of Franciscanism of our century. Douglas SSF is still widely known, but it is good to see Andrew SDC, George BHC and Edward Bulstrode's contribution acknowledged.

The author sees what unites them as holiness, a conclusion drawn from the quoted opinions of their contemporaries. But from where did these charisms of holiness come? This narrative suggests that all four had an inner conviction, a sense of the Franciscan life as a necessary witness on behalf of the disadvantaged. This vision held them through the difficulties they encountered, yet was effected through a powerful individuality. So, ironically, only Douglas founded a lasting community, and that mainly through the organisational inspiration of another, Algy Robertson.

However, the humble yet uncompromising individuality of these men leaves many questions. For example, their differences: Andrew's monastic impulse was a world away from Edward's itinerant restlessness. Then there is the split between their radical lifestyles and their conservative instincts: Douglas disapproved of young people going to dances, George was uncomfortable with the Welfare State, Andrew was a Tory in the days when that meant opposing Old Age Pensions.

Ultimately, we are left with four prophetic individuals challenging society's direction rather than leaders forging groups to change it. But there we touch on the dilemma at the heart of Franciscan vocation. So this is a book which stimulates as many questions as it answers, which is what makes it such a worthwhile read.

PETÀ DUNSTAN

*Petà is the official historian of SSF and in the process of writing a book on the subject.*

**Sheila Cassidy**  
**Light from the Dark Valley,**  
 DLT, £5.95

One of the uniting factors in hospice care is the awareness to take note of a person's spiritual needs. The search for answers to some of the profound questions of life, e.g. why suffering?, what is the purpose of my life?, why me?, what have I done to deserve this? Religion can often be divisive and exclusive when considering these questions. On the other hand, it is through our faith that we can start to make sense of the spiritual journey.

Sheila Cassidy has had to face many of these questions both in her experience of being tortured and spending time in solitary confinement and in her work as a medical director of a hospice and consultant physician in palliative care. *Light from the Dark Valley* is a collection of essays

reflecting on suffering and the care of the dying. She searches for answers to 'why suffering?' by considering the book of Job alongside her experiences of working with the terminally ill. At the start of the following essay she writes: 'I work with people who are in hell. That is my calling. I bring them what comfort I can, water to soothe parched lips, a salve for blistered wounds, opium to relieve pain, but I cannot free them. My pass through the locked gates is in my name only. I can come and go at will, but not one may leave with me. That, I suppose, is my greatest pain.'

The series of essays on Good Friday make valuable reading for those who have to prepare addresses on the passion of Christ. Those of us who work with the dying and the bereaved will find the essay 'Towards a theology of hospice care' a welcome contribution to the quest for a theological basis to the spiritual dimension of our work.

As in her previous books, the author reveals sensitivity, humour, faith and authority.

ALAN COLE

*Alan is a member of the Third Order and lately chaplain at Arthur Ranke House, Cambridge.*

**Neville Symington**  
**Emotion and Spirit**  
 Cassell, £15

Ever since Freud, psychoanalysis has been linked with atheism. This book gains its significance partly because it is by a distinguished psychoanalyst who is looking critically and sympathetically at religion and arguing that psychoanalysis needs the core values that religion at its best represent.

Symington's earlier book *The Analytic Experience* showed how clearly he can present difficult ideas and particularly make the experience of what happens in therapy comprehensible. Here he argues that psychoanalysis and religion need each other. Along the way he gives succinct accounts of various relevant issues, such as the difference between primitive and matured religion, the contribution of the other major religious traditions, the weakness of Freud's critique of religion as well as a harsh critique of Jung's contribution.

In the heart of the book, he takes religion to task for its inability to understand and grapple with the destructive powers of the human heart, and whilst this shows little appreciation of the contribution that the great saints have made to human understanding, he shows clearly and specifically just how psychoanalysis can make a difference. What is missing is a psychoanalytic understanding that would illuminate traditional religious practices so that we could better understand how they work in human terms. Since he makes a crucial distinction between primitive and mature religion, it would have been useful to see what the mature religion he commends would look like in terms of its prayer and rituals and how these too can contribute to the healing of the human soul.

This is, nonetheless, a very interesting exploration of the links between the two disciplines. His final challenge is to present psychoanalysis as a spirituality-in-the-world that is inseparable from acts of virtue. This is where he challenges psychoanalysis to address the need for core values which are what give life meaning. It will be interesting to see how other psychoanalysts respond. Meanwhile, there is a challenge here to all involved in religion, especially concerning the possibility of the transformation of desire!

SEAN CATHIE

*Sean is a priest attached to St James' Piccadilly, and a training therapist for the Westminster Pastoral Foundation, working in private practice.*

**Frederick Buechner**  
**Wishful Thinking**  
 Mowbray, £6.99

This is that rare thing, a book about the faith which is humorous and a pleasure to read and which clearly belongs to the same world we share with our non-believing friends. So it will speak to them as well as to us. That's a real achievement. Better still, I can imagine that quite soon the book will have its fans, who will swap their favourite bits with each other, in vestries, bars or on the tube.

As a kind of doubters' dictionary (the author calls it a 'mongrel litter'), it will not only refresh the parts that other books do not reach but it will also be a very handy sauce bottle for the preacher and discussion group leader. So while the order is alphabetical and, hence, predictable, the idiosyncratic mixture that follows is not.

You get a sense of its flavour from the headings: Faith, Feet, Fool, Forgiveness, Freedom. It is in fact a kind of quirky encyclopaedia, and some subjects have quite long entries, such as Job, Immortality and Healing. However, part of the pleasure of Buechner's humour is shown in how he plays with this, too. So, for example, under Abraham we read: '(see under Faith)'. Elsewhere, we are advised, if we wonder why even a humorous book of definitions should be called *Wishful Thinking*, to 'see under W - that is to say for what I think it means. Wishfully.'

Lots of sound teaching and real wisdom is to be found here. So the pleasures it offers are many, not least a playfulness with the words that is fun and also wise. Give yourself a treat.

SEAN CATHIE

## Omission

The gremlins managed to remove the book details of a review by Brother Angelo in the January 1995 edition of *franciscan*: it should have read:

*Dennis, Nangle, Moe-Lobeda & Taylor*  
**St Francis**  
**and the Foolishness of God**  
 Orbis Books, £8.99



*Lamin Sanneh*

**Encountering the West:**

CHRISTIANITY AND THE GLOBAL CULTURAL

PROCESS: THE AFRICAN DIMENSION

Marshall Pickering, £13.99

I found this book required not a little effort. It is sometimes a heavy read with much academic-speak, but is full of insight and sound analysis coming from Professor Sanneh's wide experience as professor both at Harvard and Yale.

Many of the common place assumptions about Christian encounter with Africa are shattered. For instance Western Christianity has been accused of damaging indigenous cultures through its missions. Professor Sanneh, educated with chiefs' sons in the Gambia, explodes this too clumsy yet often repeated stereotype of the oppressing missions in Africa, and reveals a far more complex picture of cultural interactions.

He argues that by translating the bible into mother tongues which had previously been unwritten, missions enabled weak oppressed cultures to criticise colonialism and build nationalists movements. He denies that in every cultural contact the West is always triumphant and Africa a defeated victim, and analyses what is behind this belief.

Language is central to culture and missionary translation work had unpremeditated consequences enabling local idiom to defend itself against assertions of foreign superiority. The bible gave local people a standard by which to judge Western cultural superiority, and as the religious insights of the Western churches have been assimilated by non-Western societies a quiet re-education and re-orientation of the West itself is taking place.

Slavery and colonialism have made Westerners sensitive about their right to enter other cultures. I found this book an encouraging invitation from an African to overcome my guilt about the West's past and reject criticisms which have scapegoated missionaries for the evils of political imperialism. As Professor Sanneh himself says, 'Let not a subtle protectiveness push us to claim that Africans are inherently incapable of coping with Western contact'.

AMOS SSF

*Clare Richards*

**Who would a teacher be?**

WRESTLING WITH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

DLT, £8.95

Clare Richards: ex-nun, wife (of an ex-priest), mother and teacher. Out of that cauldron of experience comes this passionate account of what it is like to wrestle with the Church (Catholic - but that in no way negates the power of her writing for any who call themselves Christian), the education system, young people and herself (or yourself).

In what might seem like a mundane approach, she uses the seven sacraments a signposts to God and as 'ways in' RE in the classroom. But her writing is alive with

reflection on her own struggle to come to terms with life and meaning, and what shines in her is her willingness to grapple with her own difficulties and the very real difficulties if her pupils in accepting the traditional teachings of Christ.

Talking of the Eucharist, she recalls her son Pedro: "Mummy, Matthew said that Father Robin had blood in the cup. He wouldn't drink that, would he? Yuk!" Six years later, Pedro remains reluctant to receive the cup at the altar. He usually passes it by. Again and again she recounts how she has been faced with reluctance of young people to take the Church seriously because of the way that it tries to speak to them and because it manifestly fails to live out what it proclaims. Unable to let it rest there, and unable to separate her own journey of faith from those she seeks to share it with, she is always open to new ways presenting Christianity as both relevant and real.

Here she shares some of what she has discovered, and the journey that has brought her so far. For any who teach the faith, or who what to know what it's like to, or for anyone who may have lost touch with the way that young people think - it is a compelling read, and a help along the pilgrim's road.

GREG WALTERS

*Bill Kirkpatrick (ed)*

**Cry love, cry hope**

RESPONDING TO AIDS

DLT, £6.95

I have never forgotten a statement by an American Roman Catholic priest that when a person is coping with AIDS related illness then there are at least a dozen other people around them who are deeply affected too. We naturally think of partners, families and friends but perhaps less so of professional care-givers. Bill Kirkpatrick's book redresses this balance. Bill's partner Richie McMullen was infected with the HIV virus in 1986 and died in 1991. Richie was well known for his work with vulnerable young people and as a writer. It was characteristic of him that before his death he asked each of those who cared for and supported him to write an article on how this experience had affected them.

This book brings these articles together - some 20 people: the nurses, the social workers, the pastors, the doctors, the friends. Some wrote poems, others a short story, some a simple reaction, others more profoundly. The book ends with a deeply moving diary written by Bill of Richie's last days, the celebration of his life and beyond. As always with HIV and AIDS, the book does not raise new questions but old ones that have never been answered. It focuses for us the question of self discovery and mortality, the meaning of suffering and death, the pains and joys of human loving.

As David Randall, himself a priest living with AIDS, says:

'My answer to the question, "How do you cope?" is rooted in the journey of self-discovery. From the very heart of the AIDS crisis, with all its deep pain and loss, is a community of people learning to care for

themselves, to share the pain and the opportunities, to create local community support and develop a global response. I am filled with hope, and will go on inspired and supported by all those who have died, and those who are living with HIV and AIDS.'

COLIN WILFRED SSF

*Robin Greenwood*

**Transforming Priesthood:**

A NEW THEOLOGY OF MISSION AND MINISTRY

SPCK, £14.99

In this book Robin Greenwood makes an important contribution to the current debate in the Church of England on the place and function of ordained ministry in the church's life and witness.

Changing emphasis during this century in the work of theology are linked with changing perceptions of ordained priesthood - a shift is indicated from the dominance of history and Christology, and a consequently hierarchical church obsessed with its pedigree, to Trinitarian theology, a looking forward in hope, and a church which in its interdependent ministries is a reflection of the life of the triune God.

Not an easy read, but a very rewarding one with a full bibliography and footnotes which repay perusal!

ANSELM SSF

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# Brother Thaddæus SSF

**The text of the sermon preached at the requiem mass at Hilfield by Brother Samuel is offered here, in his memory**

*'Simon Peter peered into the tomb . . .'  
John 20.5*

Of course, we've known for some time that Thaddæus was dying; we've been expecting it, and there's even a sense of relief among us that the last stages have not been more drawn out, more painfully prolonged than they were, and that the end came peacefully, calmly, gently - as gentle as Thadd's essential nature.

No, his death isn't a surprise to us, but in a community such as ours, in a very real sense, any brother's death diminishes the rest of us. There's a sense of real loss.

Thaddæus was an immensely creative, imaginative and unconventional person, who lived out our Franciscan vocation in a particularly radical and vulnerable way, and who touched people and parts of the Church and of society which other brothers and sisters couldn't reach. Though he enjoyed life and people and parties, he was essentially a Good Friday person, drawn to the needs and sufferings of others.

The house at Ashmore Road which he established in the early seventies - those who went there will remember - was a quite extraordinary place, with an even more extraordinary clientele. And if Holy Trinity House is rather more comfortable, it nevertheless stood, and stands, against the conventional, the institutional, the establishment way of living the gospel. And Thaddæus seemed never to go to bed - or at least to have one! His funeral at Holy Trinity House will be a very special occasion, and many of God's little ones, marginal ones, will be there - aware of their loss and ours.

And Thadd's death reminds us of our own, brings before us the most certain fact that all of us are going to have to pass through the narrow gate of death, a passage finer than that bored by a laser beam, which will strip us of everything that we count precious. The years are passing, and for some of us the journey will come sooner rather than later.

So we look into Thaddæus' tomb and we look into our own. But also, in this requiem mass, we look into Jesus' tomb - and we find it empty. Oh, the linen wrappings are there to assure us of the death and its reality, but the body of Jesus, that which is essential to him, is no longer there.

And that's the hope, even in the middle of Lent, in which we stand and in which Thaddæus stands. That's the hope which is based on nothing that Thadd has done or achieved; not on his qualities and great gifts - though we give thanks to God for them; a hope based simply on an empty tomb - which has become a womb, of new and



*Thaddæus died peacefully at 6.30am on St Patrick's Day, 17th March 1995, at St John's Hospice in St John's Wood, near Paddington. He was aged forty three years, in the twentieth year of religious profession and in the tenth year of his priesthood. His funeral was on 27th March at Holy Trinity House, Paddington, and his ashes were buried at Holy Trinity House and at St Mary's Convent, Freeland, at his request. There have been celebrations of requiem mass at Hilfield Friary, St Katharine's Foundation, Stepney, and at other community houses. On Tuesday 16th May, there will be an open evening at Holy Trinity House for Brothers, Sisters and other groups, to remember him. It will begin with a eucharist at 7.00pm. At the end of the Life Professed Brothers' Meeting in June at Hilfield, a tree will be planted in the cemetery in his memory. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.*

eternal life. That's the radical, unconventional, outrageous hope which has brought us together here in this Community, and which now unites us with Thaddæus.

So, Thaddæus, our brother, may Jesus bless you. May your wounds be healed, may your sins be forgiven and may your new birth, which was begun in your baptism, be brought to joyful completion - so that one day we may together laugh merrily in heaven.

★ ★ ★

## The Life of Thaddæus

Thaddæus began life as Philip Simon Burgoyne-Johnson, the younger son of a family 'in the wine trade', as he enjoyed relating. He went to school in Whitley Bay and Scarborough, and hated it so much that Frank, his elder brother, frequently had to collect him from London when he ran away. He wanted to be a Franciscan from the age of seventeen and, despite the attempts of many to put him off, finally achieved his aim at the age of nineteen, possibly a record.

He was a rebel from the start. He stood out for what he stood for: seeing all of humanity as made in the image of God and trying to relate to them as he would to God. After fighting his way into profession at the age of twenty three, he showed us all how truly to live the Franciscan life, both in Notting Hill and Paddington.

Again, he fought to be a priest, in the teeth of ecclesiastical opposition, and then showed priests how to be truly priestly.

He saw the role of priest not primarily as presiding at the eucharistic altar but as kneeling at the feet of the unclean, gently washing their feet with his tears and drying them with his hair; not by leading God's chosen people in some self-righteous crusade but by sitting listening to those no one else wanted to listen to, waiting patiently for them to find the right words, waiting patiently for the right occasion.

He was truly a brother and truly a priest and will be both to us for ever.

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